



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

Contact: Kevin Kelly

Phone: (573) 751-9300

Governor Office Building, Suite 900

FY-02-95

COMMISSION WILL SEEK A REVIEW OF THE CIRCUIT COURT RULING REGARDING THE COLD WEATHER RULE

Jefferson City (November 27, 2001)---The Missouri Public Service Commission, in an agenda session today, has directed its legal counsel to move quickly to seek appellate review of this morning's Cole County Circuit Court order granting a stay to Missouri Gas Energy and Atmos Energy Corporation. That stay allows two of the state's eight natural gas companies to avoid implementing the Commission's emergency amendment to the Cold Weather Rule. The Commission will present its arguments to the Western District Court of Appeals as soon as possible.

That emergency amendment is designed to help get customers who are currently disconnected for nonpayment or who face disconnection for nonpayment on the system and receive natural gas service to heat their homes or apartments. A key component of the emergency amendment is providing for more lenient payment terms in an effort to get service restored for customers without natural gas heat.

"Time is of the essence," stated Commission Chairman Kelvin Simmons. "The forecast tonight and for the next couple of days in Missouri calls for cold temperatures and either snow or freezing rain. There are thousands of Missouri Gas Energy and Atmos Energy Corporation customers who would be able to get their service restored under this emergency amendment. We need to do everything that we can to help these customers who face a cold home or apartment."

As part of today's action, the court scheduled a hearing for December 20, 2001 to decide the issue of the emergency amendment's legality. "That is just too late to help those in this emergency situation," stated Chairman Simmons. "We intend to move swiftly and ask the Court of Appeals to vacate the stay and force Missouri Gas Energy and Atmos Energy Corporation to implement this emergency amendment."

"The court decision today coupled with the fact that Missouri is still waiting for its full allotment of federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding, makes it very difficult, not

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only for those customers trying to heat their homes but for the many worthwhile service agencies that are trying to help get customers the dollars they need to get reconnect and receive service. This is not a good situation at all,” stated Simmons. “We intend to pursue every avenue available to us to help those who are in need when they need it the most.”

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